

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: ~~HA-865~~ HA-869  
MAGI # 1308653834  
COUNTY:  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER DATE

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: <i>Historic Marker - Bush Declaration at Harford</i>			
AND/OR HISTORIC: <i>Site of the "Bush Inn".</i> <i>Town</i>			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>North side of Philadelphia Road (Md 7) about</i>			
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Bush</i> <i>100' east of Bynum Run.</i>			
STATE: <i>Md</i>	CODE:	COUNTY: <i>Harford</i>	CODE:
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>			
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP	STATUS
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Public</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Object</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Occupied</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Unrestricted</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <i>Historical Signpost</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>			
OWNERS NAME: <i>State Roads Commission</i>			
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>300 W Prosser Street</i>			
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Baltimore</i>	STATE: <i>Md.</i>	CODE:	
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: <i>CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT</i>			
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>HARFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE</i> <i>40 S. MAIN ST.</i>			
CITY OR TOWN: <i>BEL AIR</i>	STATE: <i>MARYLAND</i>	CODE:	
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:			
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>			
TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/>			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:	

ACREAGE

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

☒ Excellent☐

Good

☐

Fair

☐

Deteriorated

☐

Ruins

☐

Unexposed

☐

INTEGRITY

(Check One)

Altered

☐☒ Unaltered☐

(Check One)

Moved

☐☒ Original Site☐

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This metal sign on a pipe post  
has black letters on "white" metal.  
The black border bearing the Maryland  
seal at top center.

## B. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian ☐16th Century ☐18th Century ☐20th Century ☒15th Century ☐17th Century ☐19th Century ☐

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal ☐Education ☐Political ☐Urban Planning ☐Prehistoric ☐Engineering ☐

Religion/Phi-

Other (Specify) ☐Historic ☐Industry ☐losophy ☐Agriculture ☐Invention ☐Science ☐Art ☐Landscape ☐Sculpture ☐Commerce ☐Architecture ☐

Social/Human-

Communications ☐Literature ☐itarian ☐Conservation ☐Military ☐Theater ☐Architecture ☐Music ☐Transportation ☐Public  
Information

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

His historical marker reads:

"The Bush Declaration"  
Harford Town

County seat of Harford County from its  
origin March 1794 until March 1783.  
Here the first Declaration of Independence  
ever adopted by an organized body of men  
duly elected by the people was  
proclaimed on March 22, 1775."

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		
ORGANIZATION	DATE	
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

in Virginia, and the Continental Congress again met in Philadelphia in May, 1775, and agreed to stop trade with Great Britain until the objectionable Acts were repealed.

Again, Bush came into prominence by having as its guests men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry, as they journeyed through Harford to Philadelphia. In this Congress our distinguished citizen, William Paca, who was born at Abingdon, together with Matthew Tilghman, Thomas Johnson, Jr., Robert Goldsborough, and Samuel Chase, represented Maryland.

By the early part of 1775 almost our entire citizenry had become so stirred by the national controversy that a most important event took place at Bush. Just three days before Patrick Henry made his well known speech, a committee of thirty-four Harford citizens met at the Bush Tavern and, after deliberation, signed the famous Bush Declaration, which is quoted in full with its signers in another chapter.

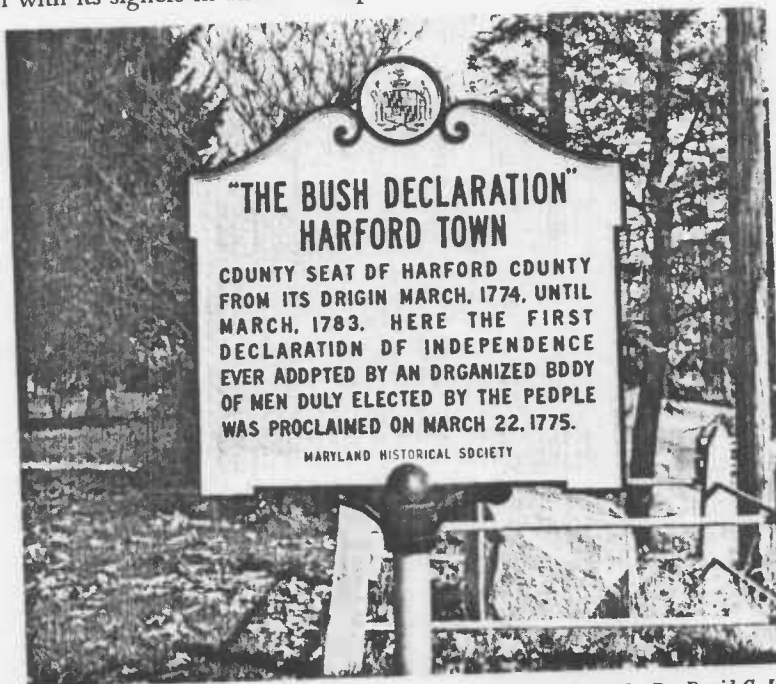


Photo by Dr. David C. Hodge

The committee was in no sense just a mass meeting, but its members were duly elected by the 10,000 inhabitants of Harford County, and was composed of prominent men, many of whom are ancestors of citizens of today.



Photo by Dr. David C. Hodge

Tablet marking the site of the building in which Court was held 1774-1783.  
Bush Declaration signed here on March 22, 1775.

Just as the former county seats of Old Baltimore and Joppa had served their day, so Bush ceased to be and soon faded into decay. Of all the dwellings, stores, and inns, only one—the large old coachhouse on Route 7—remains to remind us of the glorious history of 200 years ago.

### Scott's Old Fields (Bel Air) 1782-

By the end of the Revolution, the population of Harford had increased to almost 12,000, and the new settlers were beginning to occupy lands in central and northern sections. Consequently, there was demand that the county seat be located somewhere more accessible to the whole population.

On January 22, 1782, an Act was passed by the General Assembly enabling the voters to select a new location for the seat of government. The places named in the Act to be voted for were Harford Town (Bush), Gravelly Hill, Lower Cross Roads, Otter Point, and Scott's Old Fields (Bel Air). By the same Act, the justices were authorized to purchase four

THE SUN, BALTIMORE, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 27, 1926

# Declarations Have Had Active Part In The History Of Maryland

## From Cecil Calvert's "Declaratio" To The Bush Resolves Of March, 1775, They Were Many

BY EMILY EMERSON LANTZ

**D**ECLARATIONS seem to have been associated with Maryland since the conception of the colony.

Cecil Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, broadcasted what was called the "Declaratio" before he fitted out the Ark and the Dove to transport the earliest adventurers to the province. In it he made known the terms upon which land could be acquired in Maryland and to all colonists he promised religious liberty and protection of rights.

The first declaration framed by Marylanders themselves pertained to the agitation aroused in 1676 when an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. John Yeo, wrote a letter from the Maryland province to the Archbishop of Canterbury, complaining that the colony was a veritable "Sodom of uncleanness and a pesthouse of iniquity," which accusation was vigorously denied by the Proprietor and Maryland people.

### LACK OF CLERGY CITED

Mr. Yeo complained of the limited number of Anglican clergy in the province, the lack of consecrated burying grounds and urged that formal livings be provided by the Government for priests of the Anglican Church.

To this letter Charles Calvert made reply that since there were fewer members of the Established Church than of other denominations in the province, citizens would not take kindly to being taxed to maintain clergy of any denomination other than their own. A "Declaration" was prepared by representative Protestants of Maryland in May, 1686, who sustained the position taken by Charles Calvert. In it they repudiated the "ill reports and foul aspersions . . . of inveterate, malignant and turbulent spirits."

When the poll tax for the support of rectors of the Established Church of England was eventually imposed, it created a sense of injustice among colonists that was a forerunner of the discontent in relation to taxes that found final expression in the Declaration of Independence which the thirteen colonies endorsed July 4, 1776.

### IMPORTATION ACT.

The Importation Act was passed as early as 1733; by which heavy duties were laid upon rum, sugar and molasses brought into the province of Maryland. The cutting of pine trees outside of inclosures and the manufacture of steel were forbidden.

The Stamp Act was passed March 22, 1765, by Parliament, despite the remonstrance of some of England's own statesmen. By the provision of this act all legal documents were ordered executed on paper furnished by the Government and bearing an English stamp. Every deed, license, bond, mortgage or note must bear these stamps, the price of which varied from pennies to pounds.

Newspapers, almanacs, pamphlets and advertisements fell beneath the yoke of this tax, and in legal matters failure to comply with the requirements invalidated the document.

The Mecklenburg Resolves of May, 1775, constitute a veritable declaration of independence from British sovereignty. They stated that all civil and military commissions granted by the Crown were null and void and the constitution of each colony wholly suspended; that legislative and executive powers were vested solely in the Provincial Congress of each colony and that the people of Mecklenburg therefore should form certain regulations for the colony.

In effect Mecklenburg declared independence subject to contingent limitations. The Resolves were read by Col. Thomas Polk from the door of the Court House of Charlotte-Town, Mecklenburg county, May 31, 1775, and in fact Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, was never after under British rule.

Today in North Carolina the Mecklenburg Declaration is engraved upon the statute books, the date it bears is emblazoned upon the great seal of the State and its anniversary is observed by legislative enactment. It is said that the Mecklenburg Resolves of May, 1775, appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette and County Journal* of June 13, 1775, and that some of the most striking expressions of the Declaration of Independence that made Thomas Jefferson immortal were embodied in the Mecklenburg Resolves of May 31, 1775.

Frederick, Md., urged by John Hanson, had a part in speeding up the American Revolution by municipal protest against Maryland delegates in debate before the Congress of the thirteen colonies being hampered by instructions to disavow all designs in the colonies for independence.

John Hanson, "President of the United States in Congress assembled," as he was styled in official documents during the years 1781-1782, when he presided over the deliberations of the Continental Congress, was born in Charles County, Maryland, in 1715, but resided in Frederick county after 1773.

He was especially in sympathy with the spirit of active resistance to British oppression that marked this county. It was he who established munition factories and helped enroll citizens in military companies. He was chairman of local committees of safety and a delegate to the convention that removed from the proprietary government control of the affairs of the province.

It was the committee of which he was chairman that frustrated an attempt of the royal Governor of Virginia to launch a Tory and Indian attack upon the western frontiers of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia and when he found the Maryland delegates prohibited, by instructions from Maryland issued in 1775, from voting for the Declaration of Independence, he roused the people of Frederick to assemble in public meeting June 17, 1776, at which meeting they pledged themselves to support the union of the colonies with their fortunes and their lives.

### SENT TO ANNAPOLIS.

These resolutions were sent to Annapolis, where the Provincial Assembly was in session, and the interest had such influence that on June 28, 1776, Maryland withdrew her timid instructions to delegates and in their place submitted instructions to concur with the other united colonies, or a majority of them, in declaring the united colonies free and independent States.

These new instructions were received by the Maryland delegates in Congress on July 2, 1776, when their unanimous vote was given for independence.

A meeting of protest was called at Faneuil Hall, Boston, before the "Sugar acts" of 1764 should go into effect, when Samuel Adams and James Otis vigorously opposed them, and at the call of Massachusetts and South Carolina representatives from some of the colonies met at the Stamp Act Congress in New York in October, 1765, and Patrick Henry, of Virginia, voiced the sentiments of his State that took declaration form in the Bill of Rights

signed at Williamsburg, Va., May 12, 1776, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of which was recently celebrated.

### BUSH DECLARATION.

But amid them all the preliminary declaration that stands out earliest in matter of date is that known as the Bush Declaration, signed in Harford

county, Maryland, by men who realized to fullest extent the gravity of their action. The ancient record reads:

"At a meeting of the Committee of Harford County, at the Town of Harford (or Bush), by adjournment on the 22nd of March (1775) the following declaration was adopted:

"We, the Committee of Harford County, having most seriously and

into execution, we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to each other and to our Country and engage ourselves by every tie held sacred among mankind, to perform the same at the risk of our lives and our fortunes."



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"We, the Committee of Harford County, having most seriously and

maturely considered the Resolves and Association of the Continental Congress and the Resolves of the Provincial Convention, do most heartily approve of the same, and as we esteem ourselves in a more particular manner intrusted by our Constituents to see them carried into execution, we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to each other and to our County and engage ourselves by every law we hold sacred among mankind to perform the same at the risk of our lives and our fortunes."

*The Baltimore Times Friday, February 1, 1929.*

REVIVIFY HARFORD  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Every night from my bedroom windows facing South and East, I watch the revolving flashes of the airmail route signals at Edgewood Arsenal and at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, marking a new highway along the Atlantic Coast. Daily, I see the increasing number of planes rapidly traveling north or south and frequently passing over my own home. Already on two occasions have we had friends visit us in this modern fashion, parking their machines in a back field with noses against the woods for protection. So I suppose it will not be long before a hangar will supplement the garage and supplant the useless "carriage house". Fields which formerly raised hay for the horses, will form "take offs and landing places". It has all come so quickly—I probably should say time flies—for it was twenty years ago when I purchased my first Buick and abandoned my faithful horse and buggy. In winter, when the execrable roads of that date made me return to that less than six mile an hour gait, I felt the terrible slipping back to the limited distance which a horse could accomplish in one day.

The flash lights are located about the same distances apart as were the old stage coach taverns where horses were changed in 1776, and the distance was all one set of horses could accomplish in as many hours as it takes minutes to go by plane. Yet this first highway was the only thoroughfare our ancestors knew and from accounts written at that time they knew them to their sorrow.

Joppa, on the Gunpowder, is on a line with the Edgewood Arsenal air plane flashing signal light, and the "Bush" or Harford Town stage for changing horses is not far from parallel with the Aberdeen Proving Ground light. These two important old towns have practically disappeared. Joppa was the county seat of Baltimore County from 1712 till 1768, when the Court House and Jail were moved to Baltimore Town. Joppa's tobacco wharves and thriving business gradually disappeared until now one finds—but one remaining house built by Benjamin Rumsey, still full of interest. One other remaining reminder of past importance is a large tombstone on which is graven "John McCollough" merchant in Joppa, Died 1766.

The various "Joppa Roads" tell of the hogsheds of Tobacco which were rolled from up county plantations to the wharfs and on to foreign lands. They were the flash lights

of those days.

Bush, or Harford Town, was the first county seat of Harford County, when the section of Baltimore County between the Gunpowder River and the Susquehanna was set up as a new county in 1774.

An old "New and Universal Gazetteer or Modern Geographical Dictionary" published in 1880 by Joseph Scott and printed in Philadelphia has this to say of Harford Town. "A post town of Maryland and in Harford County, on the post road leading from Philadelphia to Baltimore. It is situated on Bush river, at the head of tide water, near the confluence of James' and Binom's Run, 53 miles E of Belle-Air, and 12 S. W. of Havre de Grace. It contains 16 dwellings and 130 inhabitants; a complete merchant mill, a tanyard, a cooper's, wheel-wright's and blacksmith's shop; two stores and two taverns. The lots belonging to the town are very fertile, and well adapted for gardens, and meadows. In the vicinity is a large bed of yellow ochre, of an excellent quality. Situated at the head of navigation, it enjoys a safe and easy water communication with Baltimore, and the different ports and rivers which have immediate connection with the Chesapeake. It carries on an extensive trade, in wheat, with the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Virginia, Harford County, and the adjacent parts of York and Cumberland Counties in Pennsylvania. The situation is healthy, and agreeable. In the neighborhood are several neat country seats. It is 27 miles N. E. of Baltimore 77 S. W. of Philadelphia. Lat. 39.28, N. Lon. 1.14. W."

Alas poor Harford Town—but few old houses remain. The mill and a couple of mill houses are near what was the water's edge, now but a swamp, and one passes through by auto so fast that he never notices the granite monument with its bronze tablet telling of the days when the Harford County Committee met there during the stirring days preceding the Revolution and on March 22, 1775 signed a declaration binding themselves to carry "into execution" the Resolves and association of the Continental Congress and the Resolves of the Provincial Convention. They were in earnest or they would not have said "we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, and engage ourselves by every tie held sacred among mankind, to perform the same at the risk of our lives and fortunes".

Washington in his diary mentions his various stops at Joppa, Harford and the "lower Susquehanna ferry" at Havre de Grace, where John Rodgers kept tavern. And all of the Revolutionary worthies passed this same way. The Old Post Road is crowded with memories of which neither the flier in his plane nor the speedster in his buzz wagon have any knowledge. Is it not time to set out some of the story of this old artery of travel? Virginia has and is continuing to mark with permanent signs every point of interest along her highways—Colonial homes, even the names and dates of the early tracts of land, and by whom they were taken up. Pennsylvania is likewise erecting similar signs along its highways at every town giving the date of its foundation and how it acquired its name as well as historic associations with the locality. And this is not mere sentiment, it is good business advertising. Thousands of machines daily pass from north to south and a great number of these are interested in the country's history. If signs called to their attention the fact that they were passing through a country which not only is beautiful, but which has historic background, they would remember it, frequently stop to inquire for greater detail which could be furnished through pamphlets, telling all of Harford County's advantages.

The Harford County Historical Society has a mass of early data collected by the late Dr. George Archer, which he always intended to publish. Judge Walter W. Preston did publish in 1901 a very complete History of Harford County, copies of which are now difficult to secure. Is it not time for the Historical Society to prepare some of this data in an up-to-date manner and mark the historic sites along its highways?

How many innkeepers, merchants, gasoline stations, garages, and other business people as well as individuals feel that such a vitalizing of the Harford Historical Society is worth while?

J. ALEXIS SHRIVER.



## THE BUSH DECLARATION

(Some weeks ago we recounted the fact that Mr. Samuel W. Bradford had addressed the Chimney Corner Club on the subject of "The Harford Declaration of Independence at Bush", and promised our readers that we would later give them a resume of his address and the salient points thereof. The Harford Declaration, while not the first overt act of revolution, was the first Declaration by an organized body of citizens elected by the people. Mr. Bradford is peculiarly conversant with matters of historic interest to Harford County, and the following summary and statement should be preserved. Editor.)

The Harford Committee of the Revolutionary period first met in 1774, as a Mass Meeting Committee. This Committee acted to the best of their judgment, in accordance with the instructions and recommendations of the Continental Congress of that year, and on January 23, 1775, their minutes showed that they made this entry:

"This Committee having to the best of their skill and judgment discharged the trust reposed in them, earnestly recommend to their constituents, the choice of a new Committee, to consist of ten men in each hundred, the election to be made as follows" (giving the polling place in the various hundreds and appointing the day of election therein).

This Committee evidently desired to take some action which they did not think they had the power to do as then constituted, and evidently wished that such action should be from a Committee duly elected by the people of the County.

The election took place, and the newly elected Committee met on the 22nd of February, 1775, and organized in a regular parliamentary manner, by adopting rules of procedure, &c. They then adjourned until the next day, when they made a provision for taking up a collection for the poor of Boston, and also to buy arms and ammunition. Then they adjourned for one whole month, to meet on the 22nd day of March, 1775. This long adjournment was significant, and probably was caused by their want of definite knowledge as to what had been done by the British Parliament and Ministry, in regard to the Bill of Rights and Memorial accompanying it, which had been before those bodies.

On the 22nd day of March, 1775, they met at Harford Town, having evidently heard of the fate of the aforesaid Memorial and Bill of Rights, for Patrick Henry had also heard about it, as his famous speech was made in the Virginia Convention which had met about the same time.

## THE BEL AIR TIMES

The Harford Committee, without any preamble or furbelows, at once formulated and adopted their Declaration of Independence, in which they stated that they would carry into execution the resolutions of the Continental Congress, which were the Bill of Rights, pledging themselves to their country and to each other, binding themselves by every tie held sacred among mankind, to perform the same at the risk of their lives and fortunes. This meant an entire breaking away from the control of and allegiance to Great Britain,—King, Parliament and Ministry to the contrary notwithstanding,—and meant death for each one of them as traitors to Britain.

This Declaration of the Harford Committee evidently did not meet with the approval of the Provincial Congress of Maryland, which met shortly afterwards in May, 1775, at Annapolis, the members of which were for temporizing, as it were, and opposed to the breaking away of all allegiance to Great Britain at that time, so we find them in July of that year taking action in regard to the Harford Committee, dissolving it, and reducing it from a membership of eighty to eighteen, and permitting these eighteen to exist simply as a Committee of Observation.

Let us now take a step forward to the following year; when our great National Declaration of Independence was framed and adopted, on July 4, 1776, and note certain events following.

On July 8, 1776, four days after the National Declaration was adopted, John Hancock, the presiding officer of that Assembly, wrote a letter to the Provincial Convention then in session at Annapolis, and enclosed an official transcript of the National Declaration of Independence and requested the Provincial Convention to promulgate it as they saw fit and proper.

On the 16th day of July, 1776, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, the presiding officer of the Provincial Convention at Annapolis, wrote a letter to the Harford Committee, enclosing the original Hancock letter and the official transcript of the National Declaration, and asked the Harford Committee to promulgate it, and made no request to have the Harford

Committee return these important papers. The Harford Committee preserved those papers, and deposited them after the Revolution, in the Court House at Harford Town, in which they had held their meetings and whose records and papers were transferred to the Court House in Bel Air when the Court was removed from Harford Town to the present County seat.

In 1900 a tablet was erected in commemoration of the Harford Committee's Declaration of Independence at Harford Town, now known as Bush.

About a year or more after this tablet was erected I met Dr. George W. Archer on the streets in Bel Air. He had been for a number of years collecting data for a contemplated history of Harford County. He said to me: "Bradford, I have here some interesting letters. You may wish to see them. Take good care of them," and handed me a bundle of papers. I took them home, and when I opened them I was perfectly astounded at the contents, for in them was the original Hancock letter and the original Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer letter. The official transcript of the National Declaration of Independence was not among them, but the reference to it was in the letters of Hancock and Jenifer. I kept these letters for some little time, and then wrote to Col. William H. Love of Baltimore, who was then the Secretary of the Board of Trade in that City, and who had taken quite an interest in our Harford history. He replied and said, "Do nothing until I see you; I am coming up tomorrow". He came up and I showed him the letters. He too was astounded, and begged me to let him have them to show to the members of the Maryland Historical Society, saying he would take the best care of them, and return them to me. I gave them to him. He wrote me that he had shown them to members of the Maryland Historical Society, and they were astonished, and requested him to write a paper in regard to the Harford history.

He did this, and wrote me that he had the papers which I had given him safe in the vault in his office in the Rialto Building, Baltimore, that he was coming up shortly, as he wanted to see the old Priests' house, and that he would bring these papers up with him. That was the last I ever heard definitely about them. The fire in Baltimore probably destroyed them.

I waited for sometime, and was about to write to Colonel Love in regard to them, when I picked up the newspaper one morning and read he had died suddenly at his home.

## STATE OF MARYLAND.

## HARFORD COUNTY, Set:

I hereby certify that on this 7th day of December, 1926, before me the subscriber, a Notary Public of the State of Maryland, residing in Harford County, duly commissioned and qualified, personally appeared Samuel W. Bradford, and made oath on the Holy Evangelical of Almighty God, that he received from Dr. George W. Archer the bundle of papers as above stated, that this bundle contained papers evidently belonging to

the Harford Committee, among which were some referring to the action of members of said Committee in Deer Creek Hundred; that in this same bundle were the letters of John Hancock and of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, as above stated; that this bundle of papers, including the letters of Hancock and Jenifer, were turned over to Col. William H. Love, then Secretary of the Board of Trade of Baltimore, as stated above; that the last definite knowledge which the said Samuel W. Bradford had of the letters referred to was when Col. Love wrote to him that he had them safely in the vault in his office in Baltimore, and that he would bring them with him when he came to see the old Priests' House, which he contemplated doing.

And the said Samuel W. Bradford further deposes under oath and says, that Col. Love once told him that he had shown the Hancock letters to Mr. Frederick W. Story, an Attorney in Baltimore (who was somewhat of an expert on handwriting), and that he had pronounced it genuine, and after Col. Love's death the said Samuel W. Bradford met Mr. Story on the street in Baltimore and asked him if he recollected the fact that Col. Love had shown him the Hancock letter; he replied "yes". That the said Samuel W. Bradford then said to him: "I will probably want you sometime to give me a certificate to that fact." Mr. Story died without this having been done.

WITNESS my hand and Notarial Seal.

ANNA LEE WILSON,  
Notary Public

#### MR. BRADFORD'S ADDRESS

Even after the lapse of nearly 30 years, Samuel W. Bradford, Esq., has frequent requests for copies of his address delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of the tablet erected to the signers of the "Harford Declaration of Independence", at Harford Town on July 4, 1900. To meet this demand he has recently had the address printed in neat pamphlet form at THE TIMES office, which gives it more permanence and makes it a part of Harford's historical literature. It will be gratifying to know that his memorable address has now been made more available, and it will, without doubt, find its way into many libraries.

*Rel Air Times*  
March 14, 1930.

THE SUN, BALTIMORE.  
MONDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 5, 1928

## Bush Tavern, Old Maryland Landmark, Goes On Sale Today

George Washington And Other Great Colonial Americans Were Among Guests At Ancient Hostelry In Harford County

One of Maryland's oldest historical landmarks will go on the auction block today. The old Bush Tavern, where what was said to be the first Declaration of Independence was signed, is at Bush, near Abingdon, on the Philadelphia road.

In the days when the road was described as the "path that runs from the Potomac to the Susquehanna," the old tavern often housed as overnight guests many of the leading citizens in the history of the republic.

#### George Washington Rested There

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe all are said to have rested for the night at the ancient hostelry while en route to New York and other Northern points.

It was before the open fire of the tavern that thirty-four residents of Harford county drew up what is known as the "Harford declaration"

and frequently called the first Declaration of Independence.

#### Concluding Words

It concluded with the words:

"We do most solemnly pledge ourselves to each other and to our country and engage ourselves to every tie held sacred to mankind, to perform the same at the risk of our lives and fortunes."

Aquila Hall was one of the signers.

In the early days of Methodism the evangelists Ashbury and Pilmore preached at the tavern.

#### Rates For Meals

Tavern rates as affixed by the courts in the early days of the Bush Tavern according to an early chronicle, were:

Hot dinner, with beer or cider 2s.  
Cold dinner, with beer or cider 1s. 6d.  
Breakfast or supper, with green tea ..... 1s. 6d.

The tavern will be auctioned at 2 P. M. It has passed out of the hands of the descendants of the original owners.



219a

Old Tavern

Bush -

Harford Town

Harford Co